

begin the post-war reconciliation process.

Let us focus on putting Iraq back together again, changing our role from that of military occupier to reconstruction partner.

First and foremost, we must end the war. Our brave soldiers have served bravely and sacrificed plenty. It is time to return them home to their families, and it is time for the United States to truly devote itself to the spread of democracy worldwide through peaceful partnerships and not military conquest.

□ 2200

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRESS MUST PAVE THE ROAD TO ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Memorial Day weekend marks the beginning of the summer driving season, the time of year when high gas prices will most harm families struggling to stretch family budgets already at the breaking point.

More than 31 million Americans will take to the Nation's highways this weekend for long trips. Each of those miles will cost consumers dearly at the pump because of misguided energy policies.

The simple fact is that the White House and the Republican Congress knew before they passed it that America's dependence on foreign oil would increase under the Bush energy bill. But there is hope. On Saturday, I joined my colleague, Senate Democratic leader HARRY REID, in Cleveland to announce our plan for a better, brighter future.

Our plan invests in ethanol and other biofuels grown in the Midwest, not drilled for in the Middle East. It requires increased production of flexible fuel vehicles capable of burning an 85 percent ethanol blend called E-85. It requires increased investment to make E-85 more available in America's service station. It creates incentives to encourage early adoption of these com-

monsense technologies that are ready to be put into production today.

Our plan also expands the tax credits for consumers who buy especially efficient hybrid cars, and it cracks down on gasoline price manipulation.

It makes it crystal clear to Big Oil that manipulation, either direct price gouging or withholding supply to drive prices up, is against Federal law. Not slap-on-the-hands kind of antiprice gouging legislation, but serious penalties and fines that will make the oil industry pay attention.

It also redirects Federal support to help rebuild the energy industries of the future. Rather than subsidize Big Oil, we should be helping farmer-owned biofuels, innovative hybrid, and fuel efficiency component manufacturers, and other emerging energy industries to grow, the kinds of jobs perfect for Ohioans who know so much about manufacturing and Ohio farmers who have contributed so much to our State.

This is about energy in my State, and it is about jobs in Ohio. With our natural resources and real leadership on energy policy, Ohio can become the Silicon Valley of alternative energy. Our plan is to invest in research.

In the 1940s, the Manhattan Project brought the Nation's best scientific minds together to develop the means to end a global catastrophe. In the 1960s the Apollo Project brought the Nation's best minds together to help our country reach a bold new goal.

Our plan creates a new advanced research project agency for energy, a mission-driven task force based on those successes, to help us build an energy future that is both economically and ecologically sustainable.

Those are not the only things we should do to protect consumers. We should also create public gasoline reserves to discourage supply manipulation by Big Oil and provide a cushion for consumers. We know whenever there is an interruption in supply from a hurricane, from a disturbance in the Middle East, or from a refinery fire, we know that the oil companies take advantage by spiking the price even higher than the supply interruption would suggest.

I suggested this idea to create public gasoline reserves 3 years ago. Senator DURBIN has a similar idea pending in the Senate for the last year or so. The Consumer Federation of America and the AAA have both testified that a gas reserve system would help consumers.

The White House is actually talking about the idea now. Talk is cheap, gas is not; but the White House could be on board and help move this proposal. This is a pocketbook issue for America's working middle class.

At our event in Cleveland, Senator REID and I were joined by two mothers from northeast Ohio who know firsthand how hard it is to keep up with these gas prices.

Reverend Lois Annich, a Presbyterian minister, called it "a social injustice of the highest order" that

families were struggling to pay higher gas bills while Big Oil was posting record profits: \$8 billion last quarter for ExxonMobil while its CEO earned \$18,000 an hour, while Ohio minimum wage earners who buy that gasoline are making \$10,000 a year.

And Jennifer Tucker, a working mother of two, explained how rising gas prices were making her family's economic future less secure by making her nursing education harder to afford.

Lois and Jennifer, millions of Americans just like them, know what I know: that it is well past time that this Congress and this Bush White House start putting the interests of the American people ahead of the interests of Big Oil.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

H.R. 5351 AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise on the floor to speak for a few minutes in support of H.R. 5351, the National Emergency Management Reform and Enhancement Act, and to address the need for reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This legislation represents a significant victory for democratic principles of effective Federal action for the American people.

Hurricane season starts in a little over a week, and just yesterday scientists at NOAA told us to expect another several months of dangerous storms. The devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita on our fellow citizens on the gulf coast serves as a wake-up call that the Federal Emergency Management Agency was badly broken.

Unfortunately, the inept response of many FEMA officials and the administration to this national disaster illustrated the degradation of an agency that once was a showplace of government responsiveness, efficiency, and professionalism.

My State of North Carolina has been no stranger to hurricanes and natural